7:Nicolaisen E-5 (1951-1962) 1963 MS25 Tuareg MS25

by many Tuareg, who say that they have not always known this white cotton, though indigo cotton has been introduced from the Sudan since very remote times). Maize has a normal period of growth of about three months, and two – in certain places perhaps even three – yields are taken in the hot seasons.

In addition to the above-mentioned cereals there are various kinds of vegetables grown in the Ayr gardens. Tomatoes (*tomatem*; *Solanum lycopersicum*) are grown at most seasons with the exception of the dry and very hot summer period (*ewilen*). Also common in the Ayr gardens is the sweet potato (*damkale*; *Ipomoea Batatas*), which is sown at the beginning of the rains and harvested in winter. The true potato (*batata*; *Solanum tuberosum*) has been introduced more recently, and is grown mainly to be sold to European households in Agadez. It is grown in Eastern Ayr (Tabello). Melons (*Cucumis melo*) and water melons (*Colocynthis citrullus*) are grown all over Ayr and there are different vegetables such as onions (*Allium cepa & A. sativum*), which are harvested at most seasons. Two plants are grown mainly because they are important as admixtures to porridge sauce. One is called *ékabewwa* (*Corchorus olitorius*); it has maize-like seeds which are pounded in a mortar for sauce-making. The other plant is known as *malokhiya* (*Corchorus tridens*); its leaves are dried and pounded for sauce (cf. p. 243). The latter plant also grows wild outside the gardens. There are in Ayr also certain spice-plants, e.g., *Capsicum annuum & C. frutescens*. To all these cultivated plants can be added certain fruit trees, such as the date palm (*talesdar*; *Phoenix dactylifera*), the fig tree (*tahart*; *Ficus carica*) grown in the mountains, and the lemon tree (*lemon*; *Citrus aurantifolia*) which is grown in Southern Ayr; it yields very small fruit which remains green even when ripe. It should finally be mentioned that the cotton plant (*ebduga*; *Gossypium hirsutum*) is also grown in some gardens of Southern Ayr. According to Miré and Gillet it was introduced into Ayr by the Hausa, but the plant has also been introduced further north in the Sahara in Tawat (Miré & Gillet 1956, p. 244). As stated by Rodd, the cotton plant is rare in Ayr and has perhaps been recently introduced into this region (Rodd 1926a, p. 132). There are many other cultivated plants in Ayr, but the above mentioned constitute the most important species.

In Ayr, as in the north, irrigated cereals form the basis of agriculture. Irrigation is carried out by means of a system introduced from the north, and the agricultural techniques largely resemble those of that section of the Sahara inhabited by Northern Tuareg, though there are certain differences. A new garden in Ayr is prepared by cutting and burning away the wild vegetation of trees, bushes, herbs, and grasses. By crop rotation (wheat and barley in winter; maize, millet, and sorghum in summer) it is possible to cultivate the same garden plot for a few years in succession – up to six or seven years, it is said. After this time it becomes necessary to make a new garden, or to manure the old garden plot with camel and cow dung whilst manure (*taki*) from other animals or from human beings is said not to be used, as it would cause the crops to become inedible. A well-manured garden plot can be cultivated continuously for about fifteen years. But fertilizing is not practised by all agriculturists, and to my knowledge they do not carry fresh soil to the garden plots as is the case with the agriculturists of Ahaggar. Agriculture in Ayr therefore frequently resembles shifting cultivation, though plots are irrigated, and deserted garden land is frequently seen in the valleys where agriculture is practised.

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A photograph illustrating a women making a bag from spun hair is reproduced by Lhote, who states that bags of this nature are rarely manufactured nowadays and are made exclusively by a few noble women of the *Kel Rela* tribe (Lhote 1955a, p. 319 f., pl. XV p. 384). This statement does not agree with information gathered by myself in Ahaggar, where I was told that bags were made from spun hair by Tuareg women of other tribes and notably by women of the *Iseḫḫamuren* class.

In Ayr spinning of cotton is performed mainly to obtain sewing thread, which is considered superior to European thread for sewing cotton clothes. To my knowledge most pastoral women do not spin their own cotton thread but buy it at the market of Agadez. However I have noted the existence of simple cotton bows in a *Kel Tédalé* camp in the northern part of the Ayr Massif. The occurrence of the simple cotton bow among the Ayr Tuareg should no doubt be viewed in connection with the use of this implement in the Western Sudan (cf. Lagercrantz 1950, p. 260 ff.) from where the cotton plant has also been introduced.

Coiled basket-work plays an important part with the Tuareg, particularly the Northern Tuareg who are experts in this technique which is related to sewing. A very primitive type of coiled basketry

Fig. 211. Basket (*akegegwi*) plaited from date palm leaves (*ajom*). The handle is of date palm bast (*asan*). Ahaggar, blacksmiths at Abelessa. Dimension: 0.38 m high. (N.M. G. 5835).

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